



(Photo by Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma 1st Cav. Public Affairs)

Silhouettes above the wire

A Soldier with 115th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division checks the area just outside the Karkh Water Treatment Plant in northern Baghdad during a humanitarian mission to repair a water pipe May 2.

Plan in motion to restore Haifa Street

**By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim
2-1 Cav. Public Affairs**

BAGHDAD - During a press conference with Iraqi media members, Col. Bryan Roberts addressed issues concerning the revitalization of the Haifa Street area in Baghdad's Karkh District with a project called, simply, the "Haifa Street Project."

Once described by some as "hell on earth," Roberts, the commander of the 1st Cavalry

Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, wanted to help change that image and restore the once-affluent and culturally-rich Baghdad district through a series of public works.

"It's an initiative, in cooperation with local leaders, to improve security, essential services and economic opportunities in Karkh," he said. "This exciting project will provide a way ahead to the secure, stable and prosperous neighborhoods that Iraqis want and

deserve."

The initiative sent the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion's Infrastructure Coordination Element into action. Although they have already been working with the Karkh District Advisory Council and neighborhood leaders since the brigade's arrival to Baghdad on essential service-type issues such as sewer, trash, and electricity, the ICE is now focusing on patching up the scars inflicted by

fierce fighting throughout the years there.

"The goal of this project is to make Haifa Street a safer, cleaner and better place to live, work and enjoy in the center of Baghdad," Roberts said. "The Haifa Street Project will be a visible sign of progress that all Iraqis can be proud of and other districts will emulate."

According to Roberts, the

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Troops seize EFP construction cache

By Major Kirk Luedeke,
4-1 Inf. Public Affairs Officer

BAGHDAD - Iraqi security forces, along with Soldiers from the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division and the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division continued clearing operations in the Rashid District of southwestern Baghdad May 5-6, detaining four suspected terrorists and confiscating several weapons caches, including one found at what is believed to be an explosively-formed projectile (EFP) construction site.

Stryker troops from the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment "Tomahawks," along with Iraqi national police and Iraqi Army troops, continued the fourth and fifth days of Operation Dragon Fire/Arrowhead Strike 10 to rid the Rashid District of terrorists and criminals and to protect the population.

One of the caches discovered consisted of components



(U.S. Army Photo)

Components used to build explosively-formed projectiles were discovered by Iraqi security forces and Soldiers from MND-B in the western Rashid District of the Iraqi capital May 5.

used to build EFPs.

"This is a significant find because of the threat EFPs pose," said Col. Ricky D. Gibbs, commander of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, whose unit is responsible for the operational area within the Rashid District. "These components will never be assembled into something that




can harm others. It also shows how effective the (clearing) operation is at getting after those who aren't acting in the best interests of a safe and secure Iraq."

Also discovered in two days of clearing operations were caches consisting of AK-47 assault rifles, an RPK machine-gun, large amounts of 7.62mm

ammunition and mortar rounds of varying calibers (81mm, 82mm and 120mm)

The operation included about 200 Iraqi Army troops and national policemen and 1,100 U.S. Army Soldiers working together to keep pressure on those conducting activities against the government and coalition in Iraq.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report			
	Today	Tomorrow	Wednesday
High: 101 Low: 74	High: 100 Low: 74	High: 100 Low: 73	

Commanding General: Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr.
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Editor: Spc. Shea Butler
Staff Writers: Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, Spc. L.B. Edgar, Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma, Pfc. Ben Gable, Pfc. William Hatton
Contributing Writer: Maj. Kirk Luedeke, Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim

Contact the *Daily Charge* at VOIP 242-4093, DSN 318-847-2855 or e-mail david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil.

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The "Haifa Street Project" begins to make the area safer

Plan

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project has three distinctive parts.

Part one will be projects that demonstrate visible signs of change and a return to normalcy.

"(It will clean up) buildings damaged by fighting, streets littered with destroyed cars, anti-Iraqi graffiti, closed parks and playgrounds aren't part of a living city," he said.

Part two will concentrate on improving the essential services.

"We have started assessments and working with local leaders to repair these systems," Roberts said. "All residents of Karkh deserve a healthy, sanitary and safe environment, and we are dedicated to helping (to make) this happen when and where we can."

The third and final part of the operation deals with security operations.

"Karkh is patrolled day and night," Robert said. "Coalition and Iraqi forces have forged a strong partnership dedicated to fighting those who would kill innocent Iraqi men, women and children."

Iraqi Police commander, Col. Baha,

whose department watches over Karkh, noted that since their constant presence in the area began, violent crime has nearly ceased in the area -- dropping from more than 50 murder cases in January to only a single case in March.

As a direct result of the increased security, Baha said markets are rapidly reopening, children are going back to school and many of the families who fled out of fear have started coming back to their homes.

Staff Sgt. Sean Clark, an ICE member and a Schenectady, N.Y., native, said he and his team have spent a lot of time walking the streets of Karkh in the past few months. He said seeing some of the architecture was like that of Bourbon Street in New Orleans.

"It's not bad," he commented on some of the historical buildings.

According to 1st Lt. William Pendleton, of Anaheim, Calif., this project will be the first major expenditure on war damage.

"Most of it focuses on neglect - 40 years of neglect - direct results of combat," Pendleton said. "The scope [of this project] is huge. Working on the apartments will be



The "Haifa Street Project," with the help of the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, will focus on cleaning up public areas like this small park, making the former battleground for insurgents into " ...a safer, cleaner and better place to live, work and enjoy in the center of Baghdad," said Col. Bryan Roberts, commander of 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. the scope of the project.

Pendleton, who can view Haifa Street from their balcony on Forward Operating Base Prosperity in Baghdad's center, said he remembers when he and his team watched as coalition gun ships lit up the Baghdad skies a few months ago to push out extremists.

"It's just amazing there now," he said of the atmosphere of safety on Haifa Street today. "We were out there for three hours and not a single gunshot or explosion (was heard)."

Most of the safety, in large part, is due to the partnership between the coalition forces and Iraqi Police - providing a constant presence within the Karkh District.

There are currently 29 different renovation projects in various stages of planning and execution, valued at more than \$6.3 million.

"If you see this place now, think about what it will look like in six months," said Maj. Chip Daniels, the chief of the ICE team Palmyra, Pa.

"You all are a part of history," he told his team after an assessment mission. "You should be proud to tell your families you are a part of this."



(Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim 2-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

The 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion's Infrastructure Coordination Element, known as ICE, walk down Haifa Street in Baghdad's Karkh District, assesses the damage caused by fighting there.

'Hell Raiser's Hideout' to host boxing smoker

By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim
2-1 Cav. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE UNION III, Iraq - In the movie, *Field of Dreams*, it was the words, "If you build it, they will come," that motivated a farmer to build a baseball field in an Iowa corn field.

As Spc. Timothy Dunbar, of Lowell, Mass., looked out onto a bombed-out floor of the former Ba'ath Party Headquarters, just outside his bedroom window, those similar words rang through his head.

Just days before christening a boxing ring that'll be used for the first-ever, "Black Jack Fight Night," Dunbar and a few other Soldiers put some finishing touches on a boxing ring they built for the tournament.

They dubbed the location, "Hell Raiser's Hideout," and during the upcoming boxing smoker, Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment and 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, both units with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, will square off in the ring.

"Several months ago, the battalion commander and I talked about hosting a boxing smoker," said Miami native Command Sgt. Maj. Calvin Morman, 3-82nd FA's top noncommissioned officer. "After our conversation, my response was, 'Roger Sir, I got it.' Because of the (operational tempo) of the battalion's mission and the troop surge, time passed. Out of the blue, the brigade asked us to host a boxing smoker with one of our sister battalions, 4-



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim 2-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Spc. Timothy Dunbar, of Lowell, Mass., spent the last couple of months coordinating a boxing tournament and building the ring with his team at Forward Operating Base Union III in central Baghdad.

9 Cav."

According to Dunbar, Morman asked him to do some research on boxing ring dimensions. He went online to find out what the dimension should be and put it on paper. Later, he offered up his services in building the ring.

"Originally, it was just going to be some wood and rope," he said. "From there, we got a great welder and started putting it together in little pieces. From that, we just kept adding and adding details ... even the lights above."

Dunbar and his roommate, Pfc. Justin Netherland, of Hamburg, Miss., both have backgrounds in boxing. They used to train and fight in the "Golden Gloves" amateur level during their youth. Two other Pfc.s, Timothy Iuchs, of Sedalia, Mo. and Jared Decker of Oskaloosa, Kan., never boxed in their life, but said they wanted to help out.

"We just wanted to make

it as real as possible against the environment around us," said Dunbar, who pointed at the war-damaged building that surrounds the ring. "I mean, it's just like home, but with the feel of Baghdad all around us."

According to Dunbar, during this project, everyone came by the "Hell Raiser's Hideout" to lend a hand.

Welders, such as Sgt. John Klempnow of Bay City, Mich., helped fabricate the corner posts. Staff Sgt. James Martin, of Bowling Green, Mich., helped by constructing the flooring.

"We'd come out here and work on it four or five hours a night," he said. "Sometimes, we'd be out here until two in the morning working on this. Every step of the way, we asked, 'How do we make it look like a professional ring?'"

Dunbar said a local painter added the writing on the ring,

turnbuckles and the skirt.

The team is anticipating people's reaction as they enter the 'Hell Raiser's Hideout.' Building the ring and organizing the event has been really great for Decker.

"It's just fun to have something to work on and pass the time," Decker said.

Decker, who is an avid baseball fan, used to head up a homerun derby in the hideout before they built the ring there.

"This is nice, but I lost my baseball field," he said.

Although building the ring was fun, it did come with its set of challenges, Dunbar said.

"The turn posts -- it didn't help that the ground was unleveled," he recalled.

Though they had a limited budget, Dunbar said they did it at a mere fraction of what it would cost to just purchase the materials and build a ring, even without labor costs.

"I want people to feel like this is an old Tyson/Holyfield fight when you see all the lights lit up," Dunbar said. "I used to box. Not all the guys had the 'big game,' but every boxer here will feel like a celebrity. Even if you are not a fan of boxing, you'll like this."

For Spc. Chris Thomas, who is a Military Transition Team member from Camden, N.J., the ring is "amazing." Thomas, who has an amateur record of 3-0, has been using the ring the last few weeks to train up for his fight.

"The canvas - this material is good, and these guys put a lot of time into it," he said. "It's perfect; it's like any other ring. It's as real as it gets."